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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/608,571	06/27/2003	Edwin Bolduan	ZTP01P12032	7324
24131	7590	02/09/2006	EXAMINER	
LERNER GREENBERG STEMER LLP			LU, JIPING	
P O BOX 2480			ART UNIT	
HOLLYWOOD, FL 33022-2480			PAPER NUMBER	
			3749	
DATE MAILED: 02/09/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/608,571

Applicant(s)

BOLDUAN ET AL.

Examiner

Jiping Lu

Art Unit

3749

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 November 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-16 are now in the case and remain rejected as follows.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
3. Claims 1-4, 6-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shibuya (JP8-49161) in view of Bronander (U. S. Pat. 1,773,167).

Shibuya shows a method for cloth dewatering. The clothes 40 is brought in contact with air and liquid permeable conveyor 10 and is moved in the same speed on the conveyor. Moisture was removed by suction device 20. Gas jet (at 38) is also provided for supplying gas transversely to a surface of the clothes. The air/liquid permeable conveyor 10 is equivalent to the broadly claims "absorbent material" for the same purpose as conveyor 10, e.g. moisture or liquid removal. However, Shibuya does not show the conveyor 10 made by absorbent material and at least two absorbent bodies on both sides of the clothing and a pressure-exerting roller for pressing the clothing against the conveyor of absorbent material. Bronander teaches a cloth dewatering conveyor 12 of absorbent material (page 1, lines 96-98) for absorbing moisture from cloth 15 and at least two absorbent bodies A, B, C, D on both side of the cloth 15 same as claimed. Pressure-exerting rollers 18 are also provided for pressing the cloth 15 against the conveyor 12. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to substitute conveyor of Bronander for the conveyor 10 of Shibuya

Art Unit: 3749

and to provide the method and apparatus of Shibuya with two absorbent bodies on both side the of the clothing and a pressure-exerting roller spaced apart from the absorbent conveyor as taught by Bronander in order to absorb clothes moisture and improve the cloth dewatering efficiency. With regard to the claimed material of the absorbent body in claim 13, examiner takes official notice that it is well known in the moisture removing art to use microfiber material as absorbent. Therefore, it would have obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further provide the cloth dewatering apparatus of Shibuya with a microfiber absorbent in order to improve the dewatering efficiency.

4. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shibuya (JP8-49161) in view of Bronander (U. S. Pat. 1,773,167) as applied to claim 2 as above, and further in view of Henry et al. (U. S. Pat. 6,722,053).

The clothes dewatering method of Shibuya as modified by Bronander as above includes all that is recited in claim 5 except for the method of removing moisture from the absorbent body by squeezing. Henry et al. teach a method of using squeeze-drying means 5 for removing moisture from the conveyor belt 4 same as claimed. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the method of Shibuya to include a step of removing moisture from the absorbent body by squeezing as taught by Henry et al. in order to improve the clothes dewatering efficiency.

5. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bronander (U. S. Pat. 1,773,167).

Bronander shows a configuration for removing moisture from cloth comprising at least one absorbent body 12, a contracting device having a pressure-exerting roller 18 spaced apart

Art Unit: 3749

from the at least one absorbent body 12 and a transporting device 20, 10-11, 16, 17 for moving cloth 15 which are arranged same claimed. The apparatus of Bronander is capable of removing moisture from a plurality of items of clothing. With regard to the claimed material of the absorbent body, examiner takes official notice that it is well known in the moisture removing art to use microfiber material as absorbent. Therefore, it would have obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further provide the cloth dewatering apparatus of Bronander with a microfiber absorbent in order to improve the dewatering efficiency.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed on Nov. 28, 2005 has been considered but not persuasive to overcome the prior art references. First broad claims fail to define over the prior art references. Each and every claim element is clearly shown and taught by the references. Second, the bottom of page 6 to page 7 of the Remarks, the applicant argues the prior art references fail to teach the steps of bringing the clothes in contact with the absorbent conveyor and moving in the same speed as the absorbent conveyor. This argument is without merit. The Japanese patent publication 08-049161 to Shibuya clearly shows the clothing items 40 laying or contacting with the top of the conveyor 10. The clothing items 40 are also carrying by the moving gas/liquid permeable conveyor 12. Therefore, the clothing items 40 are traveling in the same speed as the conveyor 10. Third, the applicant also argued that conveyor 10, 12 of Shibuya is not made of absorbent material. The examiner disagrees because the conveyor 10, 12 of Shibuya is made of material that is air/liquid permeable material for channeling any moisture or liquid same as the

broadly claimed “absorbent material”. However, the Bronander patent expressly shows such absorbent material conveyor 12 for removing any moisture or liquid same as broadly claimed “absorbent material”. Therefore, it is the examiner’s position in view of the combined teachings of the prior art references for one skilled in the art, it would have been obvious to substitute conveyor of Bronander for the conveyor 10 of Shibuya and to provide the method and apparatus of Shibuya with two absorbent bodies on both side the of the clothing and a pressure-exerting roller spaced apart from the absorbent conveyor as taught by Bronander in order to absorb clothes moisture and improve the cloth dewatering efficiency. Fourth, the applicant argued that the patent to Bronander does not show that the clothing items and the conveyor are moving in the same speed. It should be noted that the examiner is relying on the teaching of Bronander’s absorbent conveyor 12 for dewatering only. Therefore, it would have been obvious for one skilled in the art in view of the combined teachings of the prior art references, it would have been obvious to substitute conveyor of Bronander for the conveyor 10 of Shibuya. The examiner did not rely on the speed of Shibuya to determine the patentability of the broad claims at issue. On pages 9-16, the applicant has attacked each prior art reference separately, but would not recognize the combined teachings of the prior art references as stated in the examiner’s rejection. In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Conclusion

7. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).


A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jiping Lu whose telephone number is 571 272 4878. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, EHUD GARTENBERG can be reached on 571 272-4828. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3749

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Liping Lu
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3749

J. L.